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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 6313
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 4358
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3177
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RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 3268
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0898
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0245
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001533

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SUBJECT: CO-CHAIR AMBASSADORS DISCUSS NEXT STEPS WITH LTTE
AND PRIVATE MESSAGES TO BOTH SIDES

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Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr. for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Co-Chair Ambassadors met at Norwegian Ambassador Brattskar's residence on September 18 to hear Norwegian plans for engaging the LTTE and to discuss the development and delivery of private messages coming out of the Co-Chair meeting in Brussels. Brattskar opened by reporting that the GSL had told him they are prepared for talks with the LTTE, but want a commitment from Prabakaran that the LTTE would enter into talks with a genuine intent to negotiate a lasting peace, and commit to a verifiable, comprehensive cessation of all violence. The GSL also told Brattskar they would prefer to hold talks in a European city other than Oslo because of concerns raised by the JVP about the Oslo venue. Brattskar said Norwegian Special Envoy Hanssen-Bauer had spoken to LTTE leader Tamilselvan by phone on Saturday 9/16 and Brattskar himself is hoping to travel to Killinochchi as soon as possible this week for talks with the LTTE. Brattskar will push the LTTE to agree to talks and then decide whether a visit by Hanssen-Bauer or possibly Solheim would be warranted. Brattskar's only comment on the phone conversations the Norwegians have had with the LTTE was that the LTTE are unhappy the co-chairs did not call for a return to the military positions "status -quo ante" in places such as Sampur.

¶2. (C) Brattskar commented that there is "no way" Prabakaran will meet with the Norwegians because of LTTE concerns the GSL might try to attack. The Ambassador commented that even if Prabakaran does not meet face to face, it should be possible to arrange a public interview or even a statement that could be taped and then passed to the Norwegians to show the LTTE is committed to genuine talks and a ceasefire. Other Ambassadors agreed that would be a useful

fall-back. The Norwegians said another possibility might be a statement by Balasingham that would carry some weight. The Norwegians will explore all options.

¶3. (C) Brattskar was somewhat skeptical the LTTE would agree to talks since it would be unusual for the LTTE to enter into negotiations in a position of weakness after the battlefield losses they had suffered. The Co-Chair Ambassadors nonetheless believed that this is an important opportunity for peace that must be seized immediately. The Ambassadors further agreed that the level of violence had fallen dramatically after the co-chairs meeting and that there was now a window of opportunity to try to get LTTE concurrence to the talks and ceasefire while President Rajapaksa is in New York for UNGA.

¶4. (C) Private message: The Co-chair Ambassadors agreed it would be useful to develop a private message to deliver to both sides from the Co-chairs. In keeping with past practice, the EU as host of the most recent Co-chair meeting undertook to develop a terms of reference for the proposed human rights experts group mentioned in the co-chair statement. The EU head of mission proposed that the Co-chair Ambassadors meet with the GSL Minister of Human Rights to prepare the way for the meeting with the President. Ambassador pushed back arguing that a meeting only on human rights before the meeting with the President would send the signal that human rights outweighed all other issues when in fact the message on the importance of the ceasefire and resumption of negotiations was the most important. Other Ambassadors agreed.

¶5. (C) Action request: Co-chairs will meet later this week to craft an ad-ref message to Rajapaksa and the LTTE. Embassy would welcome any guidance the Department may wish to send.

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